CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for removing an edge bead of a coating of material that has been spun onto the surface of a semiconductor wafer, the apparatus comprising:

a. means for dispensing a solvent selectively onto the edge of the wafer; and

b. means surrounding the dispensing means for vacuuming excess solvent and dissolved coating material from the edge of the wafer.

2. An apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the dispensing means is a nozzle and the vacuuming means comprises a vacuum port surrounding the nozzle.

3. An apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a. means for spinning the semiconductor wafer; and

b. means for applying a coating material to the spinning wafer.

4. A method for removing an edge bead of a coating of material that has been spun onto the surface of a semiconductor wafer, the method comprising the steps of:

a. dispensing a solvent selectively onto the edge of the wafer to dissolve the coating material at the extreme edge of the wafer; and

b. applying a suction to vacuum excess solvent and dissolved coating material from the edge of the wafer.

5. A method according to Claim 4, wherein the suction is applied to an area immediately surrounding a location at which the solvent is dispensed onto the wafer.

6. A method according to Claim 4, wherein the step of vacuuming is performed substantially simultaneously with the step of dispensing.

7. A method for spin coating a semiconductor wafer with a soluble material, comprising the steps of:

a. spinning the semiconductor wafer;

b. applying a coating material to the spinning wafer;

c. dispensing a solvent selectively onto the edge of the wafer to dissolve the coating material at the extreme edge of the wafer; and

d. applying a suction to the edge of the wafer to vacuum excess solvent and dissolved coating material from the edge of the wafer.

8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the suction is applied to an area immediately surrounding a location at which the solvent is dispensed onto the wafer.

9. A method according to Claim 7, wherein the step of dispensing the solvent is performed substantially simultaneously with the step of applying a suction.

10. A method for dispensing a chemical onto a semiconductor wafer, comprising the steps of:

a. dispensing the chemical selectively onto the wafer; and

b. applying a suction to an area immediately surrounding a location at which the chemical is dispensed onto the wafer.

11. A method according to Claim 10, wherein the suction is applied substantially simultaneously with the dispensing of the chemical.